SG 2589

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant
Other Names/Site Number: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & Number: 7200 North Peters Street
City or town: Arabi State: LA County: St. Bernard
Not for Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Kristin P Sanders 4/20/2018

Signature of certifying official/Title: Kristin Sanders, State Historic Preservation Officer **Date**

Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title: **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
✓ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain: _____

6·22·2018

Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

X	Private
	Public – Local
	Public – State
	Public – Federal

Category of Property (Check only **one** box.)

X	Building(s)
	District
	Site
	Structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
2	0	Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
2	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.): INDUSTRY/manufacturing

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.): COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.): MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
foundation: concrete
walls: concrete, brick
roof: composition, concrete, cement tile
other: glass, metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, located at 7200 North Peters Street in Arabi, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, was completed in 1923 as a branch plant for the assembly of Ford automobiles in the Gulf South region. Historically about 16 acres and later expanded to 27.8 acres, the property was strategically located at the Mississippi River and adjacent to railroad lines to transport parts and finished automobiles to and from the plant. It includes two contributing buildings: the assembly plant (1922-23) and the oil pump house (1922-23), both of which were designed by industrial architect Albert Kahn. The plant is a sprawling, 227,000-SF structure constructed of reinforced concrete and steel that housed a variety of functions, including assembly operations with a moving assembly line, a showroom, offices, and warehouse storage. Beyond the reinforced-concrete 2-story portion facing North Peters Street, which houses the public entrance, the plant is 1 story in height and exposed steel-frame construction, with 6 gabled roof monitors running east-west to provide light and ventilation to the plant's open interior. The small 2-story oil pump house is located approximately 70 yards north of the plant and is constructed of brick, concrete, and steel. There are no non-contributing buildings on the site. In 1933, the plant ceased assembly operations and was converted into a Ford parts and distribution center. Other modifications were later made to accommodate subsequent uses, but the property still retains several key features of Ford's second generation of Kahn-designed branch plants and remains eligible for listing in the National Register.

Narrative Description

Property Overview:

The Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant is located just east of the Orleans Parish line in Arabi, a subdivision of St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana. It was constructed in 1922-23 as one of over three dozen branch assembly plants that Ford established throughout the United States between 1911 and 1932, nearly all of which were designed by the firm of industrial architect Albert Kahn. A new concept in automobile production at the time, these plants were devised to address the company's distribution problems in the face of rapid sales increases. Rather than shipping completed automobiles from Ford's headquarters in Michigan, which was unwieldy and expensive, unassembled parts were sent to branch plants throughout the country to be assembled on site. The completed automobiles were then shipped to local and regional dealers or overseas to international markets.

At the same time, Ford also established branch agencies focused on sales and servicing. The assembly plants acted as miniature factories for the agencies to supply parts needed to make timely repairs.[1] These new localized nodes of production, sales, and servicing created a more efficient and streamlined system, enabling Ford Motor Company to provide more comprehensive customer service, better target regional demand, and offer lower price points to its growing customer base than ever before. Soon enough, virtually "every other car in the United States [was] a Ford," including in the New Orleans area, and the assembly plants were a key cog in the company's success.[2]

The Arabi plant housed assembly operations from 1923 until 1933, at which time Ford converted it into a parts and distribution center. During World War II, the port quartermaster of the United States Army leased it as a warehouse. After the war, it continued as a parts and distribution center until the early 1970s, when it was sold to Southern Service Inc., an importer of Toyotas and Mazdas supplying the Midwest market. From 1977 until 2005, the building held freight storage for goods such as coffee and twine.[3] It flooded in 2005 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and sat vacant for about a decade. Today, it is leased as storage for the film industry.

The Site

Like Ford's other post-World War I branch assembly plants, the Arabi facility was strategically located adjacent to railroad lines and the Mississippi River for easy land and waterborne transportation of parts and assembled vehicles to and from the site. Historically, the plant occupied about 16 acres, including 1.8 acres of the river batture. After the period of significance (as defined in Section 8), the property was gradually expanded to 27.8 acres with the addition of a large parcel to the east of the historic boundaries and a small parcel to the west.

The plant is located on an industrial stretch of North Peters Street, which runs parallel to the river. Directly east of the plant is the massive Domino Sugar Refinery, which opened in 1909. To the west is a smattering of small 1-story industrial buildings, and one block to the north is a low-density stretch of early 20th-century residences characteristic of the early days of the Arabi subdivision, which was established in 1906.

Today, the property consists of the assembly plant and the oil pump house (1922-23), which is located approximately 70 yards north of the plant. There are no other buildings on the site, which has seen minimal change since the plant opened. The railroad spurs onto the property and the 100-foot steel smoke stack that stood at the northeast corner of the plant have been lost, but the essential characteristics that drew Ford to this location remain the same, namely the property's relationship to the river, its proximity to New Orleans's business district, the generous size of the parcels to accommodate a sprawling 1-story facility and allow for future expansion, and the industrial character of the surrounding area. Railroad lines are intact just north of the property boundary.

Assembly Plant

The assembly plant exhibits several key identifying features of Ford's post-World War I (second generation) of assembly plants: a 1- or 2-story height and expansive open floor area to accommodate an entire moving assembly line on one level; the use of reinforced concrete and/or structural steel framing to create wide, uninterrupted floor spans; a high ratio of fenestration to wall surface and the use of roof monitors to maximize interior light and ventilation for the health and productivity of the workers; simple form and massing that follow the building's function; easy-to-clean fire-resistive interior finishes; convenient employee amenities; and very limited stylistic ornamentation in favor of honest structural expression and an economical use of materials. A more detailed discussion of these features as they relate to Ford's plants and Kahn's architectural legacy can be found in Section 8 of this document.

[1] James Rubenstein, *The Changing U.S. Automobile Industry: A Geographical Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 53.
[2] "New Sales Agency for Fords Here Is Now Announced," *Times-Picayune,* September 24, 1916.
[3] Richard Campanella, "When St. Bernard made cars: Arabi assembly plant represented a little bit of the Motor City in the Crescent City," nola.com, November 5, 2014.

The 227,000-SF assembly plant has a nearly square footprint (approximately 425 feet wide by 426 feet deep).[4] It is oriented southwest to face North Peters Street and the Mississippi River and consists of two distinct sections: 1) a narrow 2-story section at the front of the building designed to house offices, 2 freight elevators, 2 stairwells, a vault, a showroom, and automobile storage, and 2) a spacious rear 1-story section where assembly operations took place. The 2-story portion is reinforced concrete construction; it extends the full width of the building (17 structural bays) and is roughly 75 feet in depth (3 structural bays). The 1-story rear section is exposed steel-frame construction and extends the full width of the building (17 structural bays) by about 350 feet in depth (14 structural bays). The flat roof spans between the steel-frame monitors are pre-cast concrete panels. Presumably, steel framing was chosen for the larger 1-story section because it more easily accommodates wide uninterrupted floor spans than concrete, and greater flexibility was required for the arrangement of assembly equipment. A concrete foundation supports both sections of the building.

Exterior (Photos 1-8): The façade of the 2-story front section served as the public face and formal entrance of the assembly plant. The front bays are 23.5 feet wide on center except the first and last bays, which are slightly wider at 24.5 feet. The cast-in-place concrete frame is exposed and doubles as a design element in that the vertical supports define the façade's 17 bays and lend a sense of symmetry to the exterior, while the horizontal beams distinguish the lower and upper floors. Red brick serves as infill beneath the large expanses of fenestration that run the entire width of both stories. The short parapet bordering the flat roof is finished with a restrained cast-concrete dentil cornice, which comprises the building's only stylistic ornamentation. On both levels, windows occupy a large percentage of the wall surface to maximize interior light and ventilation. On the 1st floor, the original multi-light steel sashes remain in place; on the 2nd floor, they were replaced in the late 20th century with aluminum sashes matching the original light pattern. The window sills throughout are pre-cast concrete matching the structural frame. The door openings along the façade have undergone some modification; the original main entrance to the plant at the southwest corner of the building retains its cast-concrete surround but the wood doors, steel windows, and transom at this location have been replaced. The other 4 door openings along the façade were enlarged to accommodate metal overhead garage doors. The original decorative cast-iron wall sconces at the 1st-floor entrances are intact although the glass globes are missing.

On the east and west elevations of the 2-story section, the original concrete loading platforms and suspended wood and steel canopies begin at the front corners and extend uninterrupted across the 1-story section, as further described below. The bays on these ends are 25 feet wide on center. Most of the original wood double doors and multi-light steel windows remain. On the roof are the original water tower, which stands prominently near the center of the structure, and the brick penthouses for the 2 freight elevators at the east and west ends. The large rooftop sign reading "Ford Motor Company" in the company's trademark script was removed by the 1950s, according to photographic documentation. Pitch pockets remain where signage was removed. The flat roof is covered with composition roofing material.

The larger 1-story steel-frame section of the building, which was dedicated to assembly activities, is 14 bays deep and commences where the front section ends. The bays along the east and west elevations are typically 25 feet wide on center except at the rear, where the last bay widens to 25 feet 10 inches. The 17 bays along the building's rear are 23.5 feet wide on center and widen to 24 feet 4 inches at either end. The steel vertical supports at the exterior walls are concealed by red brick veneer to read as engaged pilasters; red brick is also used as infill beneath the multi-light steel windows. The window sills are pre-cast concrete to match those on the front facade. The majority of the historic steel windows and wood double doors are extant along this section's sides and rear; at the northwest corner of the rear elevation, the steel windows have been replaced with overhead garage doors. The loading platforms and suspended canopies extend the full depth of both sides of the building and terminate in ramps at the rear corners. Six identical gabled roof monitors run east-west on the roof of this section and are fitted with steel clerestory windows on the north and south sides to

[4] All dimensions included in this description are based on Albert Kahn Associates' 1922 drawings and have not been field verified at the time of writing. The referenced drawings are courtesy of Albert Kahn Associates, 7430 Second Avenue, Detroit, MI, 48202-2798, albertkahn.com.

provide additional light and ventilation to the plant interior. The flat sections of roof are covered with composition roofing and those of the monitors are covered with corrugated cement-tile panels. The gable ends of the monitors, which alternate with the door openings below, are finished with smooth cement stucco over Hy-Rib, a steel reinforcement system engineered by Albert Kahn's brother Julius and his company, the Trussed Concrete Steel Company.[5]

Interior (Photos 9-15): The building's 2 sections remain distinguishable from one another on the interior due to their respective exposed concrete and steel framing, although at ground level they are undivided to create one vast interior space that is frankly industrial in character. The main entrance at the front southwest corner leads to a small administrative area that was renovated in the late 20th century with acoustical ceiling tiles and a modern bathroom; the original terrazzo floors and adjacent staircase with metal railings and wood handrail are intact. Beyond this vestibule-like entry, the 1st floor opens into the expansive assembly area, which was designed to provide maximum flexibility for Ford's moving assembly line and production processes. The concrete "mushroom" or "bell capital" columns widely used in Kahn's industrial designs and the more slender exposed steel columns and trusses are visible throughout. The concrete columns line up consistently with the exterior bays, while the steel columns skip a bay from east to west to create generous 47-foot spans. The piping and conduit associated with the building's complex electrical and plumbing systems snake overhead and down exterior walls. No assembly equipment remains, although there are several generations of electrical panels/generators and plumbing equipment. Simple industrial pendant fixtures hang throughout the space in parallel rows. Four steel-frame elevated bathroom structures (two at the east and west ends, respectively) were provided for the all-male workforce; based on Kahn's 1922 drawings, these restrooms retain their steel staircases, urinals, and private bathroom stalls; the original wash troughs were later replaced with circular wash basins. The floors throughout the entirety of the assembly area are concrete slab, and the brick wall sections are plastered, painted, or exposed.[6] The plant's 2 freight elevators and 2 stairwells are located at the east and west ends of the 2-story section; the freight elevator at the west end was discontinued after assembly production ceased in 1933 and the upper shaft was converted into a storage room. Unlike the more formal terrazzo stairs near the main entrance, Kahn designed the stairwell at the east end of the building to include a concrete slab floor, cast-concrete treads and risers, and a simple metal pipe railing, presumably because it was intended for workers' use only. A small section near the center front of the assembly area was partitioned with plywood and steel-window walls after the period of significance; otherwise, the 1st-floor layout is remarkably intact.

The 2nd floor is also industrial in character. Kahn's distinctive concrete columns are visible throughout the 2nd floor, and all piping/conduit and some systems equipment is exposed. The 2nd floor originally housed a few administrative offices and restrooms at the west and east ends. The open floor area in between was utilized as a showroom and automobile storage. The original vault and restroom locations remain but the offices were reconfigured and new CMU and steel-window partitions were added to accommodate later uses after assembly production ceased, including an equipment room, offices/meeting areas, and additional restrooms. The flooring is concrete slab. The brick wall sections are plastered, painted, or exposed brick. The ceiling is painted cast-in-place board-formed concrete.

Oil Pump House (Photos 16-18):

The small 2-story oil pump house located to the rear of the assembly plant (approximately 70 yards north) was constructed in 1922-23 to house the plant's oil pump equipment. It is brick masonry construction with cast-in-place concrete floors and exposed steel roof trusses. The 1st-floor concrete slab sits at grade. The front gable roof is covered with corrugated cement-tile panels. The 2nd floor is accessed via an exterior staircase on the east elevation. The wood doors and steel windows are original. There is no pump-related equipment remaining on the interior.

[5] Trussed Concrete Steel Company, *Hy-Rib Handbook, Sixteenth Edition* (Youngstown, OH: Trussed Concrete Steel Company, 1917).

[6] Kahn's 1922 drawings call for "wood block floors" throughout the assembly area, but there is no physical evidence that this flooring type was ever installed.

Assessment of Integrity:

Location and Setting: The property possesses integrity of location and setting. The plant and oil pump house remain in their original locations, and the setting has changed little since the plant opened in 1923. In particular, the industrial character of the immediate area, the residential section to the north, and proximity to the Mississippi River and railroad lines were all contributing elements to the plant's historic setting that continue to define it today.

Design, Materials, and Workmanship: The assembly plant closely resembles the building that Kahn designed for Ford Motor Company in 1922. Intact character-defining features include its simple form and massing; 1- to 2-story height; very limited stylistic ornamentation; honest expression of materials and structure; extensive wall and overhead fenestration for interior lighting and ventilation; prominent roof monitors; open floor plan with uninterrupted floor areas to accommodate Ford's moving assembly line; steel windows and wood doors; suspended exterior canopies and loading platforms; exterior and interior lighting fixtures; fire-resistive and easy-to-clean interior finishes such as plaster, concrete, and terrazzo; and support areas such as the elevated men's restrooms. The limited number of modifications made to accommodate the plant's later uses do not significantly detract from its eligibility since the original design is still clearly identifiable on both the exterior and interior and the vast majority of original materials are intact. The oil pump house remains virtually unchanged since its construction.

Feeling and Association: The property's intact location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship combine to provide integrity of feeling and association. The continuous operation of the adjacent sugar refinery and shipping activity along the river provide a feeling of bustling industrial activity that has likely changed little since the period of significance. The vastness of the plant's open interior provides an immediate sense of the scale of the plant's daily operations, which employed over 1,000 workers at its peak and produced up to 300 automobiles per day.[7] A former Ford employee would certainly recognize the plant if he were to visit today.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X	**A**	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X	**C**	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

Criteria Considerations:

	A	Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
	B	Removed from its original location
	C	A birthplace or grave
	D	A cemetery

[7] "Ford Plant Here Reached Record During October. – Orleans Plant Assembled Average of 300 Cars Per Day," *The Times-Picayune,* November 17, 1929.

	E	A reconstructed building, object, or structure
	F	A commemorative property
	G	Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.): Commerce, Industry, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1923-1933

Significant Dates: 1923 (completion date of assembly plant and oil pump house); 1933 (end of assembly operations)

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion D is marked above): N/A

Architect/Builder (last name, first name): Kahn, Albert (Albert Kahn Associates, Inc.)

Period of Significance (justification): The period of significance begins in 1923, when the plant officially opened, and ends in 1933, when assembly production ceased.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant is eligible for listing at the local level under Criteria A and C. The property is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of commerce and industry for its association with Ford Motor Company's groundbreaking expansion and development efforts in the early 20th century. As the Gulf South region's state-of-the-art production and distribution point for seminal Ford models, the Arabi plant was part of the automobile revolution that economically, geographically, and physically altered the American landscape. Under Criterion C in the area of architecture, it is an excellent example of the industrial design work of architect Albert Kahn, widely considered a master architect for his role in the transformation of factory design worldwide. Although he worked with a number of automobile manufacturers and designed facilities for other types of industries during his prolific career, his longtime collaboration with Henry Ford in particular cemented his legacy as one of the most influential industrial architects of all time. The period of significance begins in 1923, when the plant officially opened, and ends in 1933, when assembly production ceased.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Commerce, Industry

The Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant in Arabi, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, was one of over three dozen branch assembly plants that Ford opened between 1911 and 1932 throughout the United States as part of the company's expansion efforts to meet an insatiable demand for its automobiles, particularly the Model T. America's entrance into World War I in 1917 suspended the company's development plans, but as wartime recovery gave way to the economic boom of the 1920s, when the Arabi plant was constructed, Model Ts grew so popular that they soon comprised half of all cars in the United States.[8]

[8] National Register of Historic Places, Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Seattle, King County, Washington, National Register #00001302,

The incredible popularity and success of the Model T was the result of Henry Ford's relentless efforts to innovate, streamline, and economize, a trait that came to define his landmark career. The Arabi plant was born out of this era of invention and ingenuity and continues to embody this history today.

Historical Overview of Ford Motor Company

In 1903, Henry Ford (1863–1947) founded Ford Motor Company on Piquette Avenue in Detroit, Michigan, with the production of his Model A automobile, a sturdy little car that topped out at 28 mph. Ford was one of several small companies that got its start in the early days of the automotive industry, when cars were considered a novel luxury limited to the leisure class, and wagons/buggies, trolleys, and bicycles remained primary modes of transportation. Nevertheless, Ford's Model A met with some success and kept Ford in business long enough to design the world's first mass-market car, the Model T, also known as the "Tin Lizzie," which debuted in 1908.[9] The Model T was basic, reliable, and, importantly, affordable, which put it within reach of mass America.[10] Known as "the universal car," it was off-road capable and customizable, making it an appealing investment for farmers and urbanites alike and a popular export to countries around the world.[11] In production from 1908 until 1927, when the 15-millionth unit was assembled, the Model T Ford revolutionized the automotive industry on a global scale. According to historian Douglas Brinkley, this car was particularly significant because it "plant[ed] the seeds for the growth of the middle class…[by] creating a near universal demand with a pragmatic, high-quality product formerly considered a luxury item."[12] But it was only the first of many such revolutions credited to Ford and his empire of innovation.

By 1909, Ford had sold ten thousand Model Ts and could barely keep up with demand. He soon realized the inadequacies of his Piquette Avenue plant, and in January 1910 he opened a new facility on a 60-acre tract in suburban Highland Park on the outskirts of Detroit.[13] Designed by industrial architect Albert Kahn, the Highland Park plant (National Historic Landmark, 1978) was at the time the largest manufacturing facility in the world.[14] It was at Highland Park in 1913-14 that Ford famously instituted the moving assembly line, another company innovation that transformed the automotive industry. Consisting of a metal conveyor belt operated by flywheels, the new system created substantial savings in time and labor, making it possible to produce more automobiles in less time.[15] Within the first year of use, Model T production nearly doubled; eventually, it increased from a handful to several hundred vehicles per day, far surpassing that of competitors. The significant architectural advances of the Highland Park facilities are discussed below under Criterion C.

Meanwhile, Ford Motor Company was grappling with how to improve its sales, marketing, and distribution systems to meet and fuel demand for its products. Between 1905 and 1910, the company's sales and marketing managers, James Couzens and Norval Hawkins, established several branch agencies around the country to better control local sales, pricing, and customer service. Instead of relying on third-party dealers and distributors who worked on commission, the new Ford-controlled branch agencies sold directly to consumers as well as to some regional distributors, whose pricing the company now dictated, and also stocked parts, provided repairs and servicing in areas that previously had none, and, eventually, expanded into final vehicle assembly.[16] The earliest branch agencies were typically located in a city's business district in a leased multi-story building. However, assembly work soon proved to require its own facility, and in 1911, Ford opened its

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Section 8, page 13.

[9] Steven Parissien, *The Life of the Automobile: The Complete History of the Motor Car* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013), 12-13.

[10] Ford Motor Company, *The Ford Industries* (Detroit: Ford Motor Company, 1924), 130.

[11] Parissien, *The Life of the Automobile,* 14.

[12] Douglas Brinkley, *Wheels for the World: Henry Ford, His Company, and a Century of Progress, 1903-2003* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 135.

[13] The Detroit Institute of the Arts, *The Legacy of Albert Kahn* (Detroit: Gaylord Printing Company, 1970), 12.

[14] Woodward Avenue, "A Future for Ford Highland Park," August 2005, https://web.archive.org/web/20130903171513/http://www.woodwardavenue.org/uploaded_pics/pdf/pdf-20110128102909.pdf.

[15] Parissien, 15.

[16] Rubenstein, *The Changing U.S. Automobile Industry*, 50.

first purpose-built assembly plant in Kansas City, Missouri.[17] By the spring of 1913, there were 11 assembly plants under construction, from California to Massachusetts. In 1917, when America entered World War I, Ford was operating 29 assembly facilities outside of Michigan.[18] These early plants, nearly all of which were designed by Albert Kahn, were usually 3 to 4 stories in height, with uses typically separated by floor, and most were either built with or retrofitted for a moving assembly line modeled after Highland Park.

In 1917, Ford began construction of its River Rouge plant, a massive manufacturing center in Dearborn, Michigan. Adjacent to rail lines and the River Rouge, which Ford dredged to serve as a harbor, the new super plant was intended as a self-sufficient enterprise that could circumvent "the threat of shortages, high prices and strikes" at outside suppliers.[19] With its own steel mill, foundry, glass plant, and processing facilities, the company turned its own raw materials such as iron ore, limestone, coal, sand, and copper into its parts and products to supply Highland Park and the branch assembly plants, a new policy known as "vertical integration."[20] By this time, Ford had perceived the inefficiencies of moving assembly lines in multi-story buildings, and River Rouge became the company's first 1-story facility to accommodate a continuous flow of work at one level. This new arrangement became the model for the second generation of assembly plants (post-WWI), including Arabi, and rendered the early assembly plants obsolete. In addition, the decision to locate the new plant adjacent to the River Rouge, which was inspired by Henry Ford's insistence that waterborne transportation was cheaper than rail, was another important innovation that impacted the assembly plants of the 1920s and 1930s; all but one of the postwar facilities were similarly sited.[21] The River Rouge plant was steadily expanded until 1928, at which time it occupied over 1,000 acres, employed over 100,000 workers, and replaced Highland Park as the largest industrial plant in the world.[22] Kahn designed several of the Rouge buildings, the architectural contributions of which are discussed below in Criterion C.

When World War I ended, Ford's branch assembly plant construction was even more extensive than before. The first postwar facility was constructed in Chicago in 1920-23. The company rebuilt at least 8 prewar assembly plants to accommodate the new 1-story floor plan, and it ventured into four southern and western cities—New Orleans (Arabi), Jacksonville, FL, Salt Lake City, UT, and Norfolk, VA—for the first time to meet the growing demand in those regions.[23] By 1925, Ford had an all-time high of 32 assembly plants, including Highland Park.[24]

After nearly 3 decades of rapid growth and innovation, Ford sales plummeted during the Great Depression. In 1932-33, it closed 13 of its assembly plants outside of Michigan, including Arabi. The closed facilities were converted into parts and distribution centers.

Ford Motor Company and the Early Automobile Industry in the New Orleans Area

New Orleans, like most cities, first experienced the automobile as an expensive luxury that served little purpose beyond racing and leisure entertainment for the upper classes. The lack of an early market for cars is evident in city directories. In 1900, there are no listings for automobile dealers. The few cars sold in the city during this period were supplied through businesses like wagon and bicycle dealers and blacksmiths, all common purveyors of automobiles in the era before dealerships and sales agencies.[25] In 1905, there are five automobile dealerships listed, including a bicycle company, and all were located in the city's business district.

[17] Rubenstein, 55.
[18] Ibid, 62-63.
[19] The Detroit Institute of the Arts, *The Legacy of Albert Kahn*, 23.
[20] Ford Motor Company, *The Ford Industries*, 37.
[21] Rubenstein, 69.
[22] The Detroit Institute of the Arts, 23.
[23] Rubenstein, 66.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid, 50.

In 1908, a group of 50 automobile enthusiasts formed the New Orleans Automobile Club with a two-fold purpose: to campaign for better roads and to organize and promote the city's viability on the racing circuit, an increasingly popular pastime around the country. In November of that year, the national journal *The Automobile* reported on the new club, writing that "[t]he Crescent City has at last awakened to the fact that she has all of the advantages, both natural and otherwise, of becoming the automobile center of the South and the automobile racing center for the whole country during the winter months."[26] The club soon combined with the Motor League of Louisiana, which was similarly dedicated to the improvement of roads statewide. These organizations' activities were credited with stoking enthusiasm and increasing local automobile sales, and in 1911 the *New Orleans Item* reported that "from 450 cars in use in 1908, when the club was organized, the city has grown in car numbers until more than 1600 are now in use here."[27] The introduction of the affordable Model T Ford in 1908 was also a factor locally. In December of that year, the *New Orleans Item* hosted a giveaway of the new Ford, which it described in glowing fashion:

> You will find a car out of the ordinary and one that would make you proud to own. It is not a large car, but one of the kind that appeals to every lover of automobiles. All the latest appliances have been added to the [illegible] Model Ford, and it is as good as most of the cars that sell for twice the amount of this one. This car sells for $1050 in New Orleans and can not be bought for one cent less; in fact, it is hard to get them at any price, for the factory can hardly supply the demand.[28]

The real turning point in New Orleans's automobile industry occurred soon thereafter. In 1911, the *New Orleans Item* wrote that "[d]uring 1909 and 1910 automobile agencies grew up like mushrooms. New garages were built and many agencies were established. Firms formerly handling carriages and harness went into the business….Some of the agencies already established built larger garages and machine shops to take care of their growing trade….Today hundreds of handsome torpedo and four-door models with low-raking lines are a common sight.[29]

In August 1916, Ford Motor Company established a local presence by opening a branch agency at 2120-30 Canal Street, one of 34 agencies the company opened nationwide that year.[30] By this time, Ford cars were so popular that they comprised half of all automobiles in New Orleans, according to the *Times-Picayune*.[31] Like those in other cities, the New Orleans agency managed distribution for the surrounding territory, supplied parts and accessories, and was equipped with a service station for Ford owners. In its coverage of the opening, the *Times-Picayune* reported that the branch manager believed "that with the business prospects as they are it will not be a year before the Ford branch has outgrown its present quarters and that it is probable that ultimately the Ford company will put in a big assembling plant in New Orleans, purchasing ground for that purpose and erecting a suitable building as has been done at other points." Seven years later, this prediction was realized at the Arabi facility.

Arabi's Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant

Ford Motor Company's Arabi assembly plant was first announced in local newspapers in the summer of 1922. Rather than build within Orleans Parish, Ford's chosen site was located a few miles downriver from New Orleans's business district in a section of neighboring St. Bernard Parish known as Arabi. The large parcel was located adjacent to railroad lines and at the shores of a large body of water in keeping with Ford's location criteria for postwar assembly plants, with ample vacant land around it for future expansion. Although it was not technically located in New Orleans, the plant was referred to interchangeably as both the "Arabi" and the "New

[26] "New Orleans Now Has an A.A.A. Club," *The Automobile* vol. 19, no. 19 (November 5, 1908): 656.
[27] "Automobile Club Has Been a Big Help to Local Trade," *New Orleans Item,* February 20, 1911.
[28] "Contestants Determined; Each Has Many Votes for the Item's Prize Offerings. – Auto on Exhibition," *New Orleans Item,* December 21, 1908.
[29] "First Slow and Unsteady Growth of Auto Trade Has Taken Great Strides. – About 40 Well Established Agencies in New Orleans and All Report Good Business," *New Orleans Item,* February 20, 1911.
[30] "Ford's New Orleans Branch Is Opened. – T.L. Huber Comes from St. Louis to Be Manager of New Organization," *The Times-Picayune,* August 1, 1916.
[31] "New Sales Agency for Fords Here Is Now Announced," *The Times-Picayune,* September 24, 1916.

Orleans" plant, and it was celebrated in both parishes for the substantial economic benefits it promised. The number of jobs it created was substantial; starting with 600 men in its first year, the plant ultimately employed over 1,000 workers at peak production.[32] In addition, nearby landowners anticipated that the plant would attract residential development in the area as well as new businesses and industry, while the *New Orleans States* wrote that "When any city gets linked up with the fortune and business acumen of Henry Ford, it is [illegible] for its Chamber of Commerce to toot long and loud on its trombone. It has something to blow about….Whenever the wizard of the flivver makes a move it sounds like real money. It's the kind of jingle that is balm to Wall Street ears."[33]

The *New Orleans Item* emphasized the impact of the new enterprise on New Orleans's port, writing that "the importance of a manufacturing establishment of this size to New Orleans cannot be overestimated and the volume of shipping will add substantially to the rapidly gaining shipping records of the port."[34] According to press coverage, the plant was intended to supply the Latin and South American markets via the New Orleans port, but there is scant evidence that this export activity actually took place. Similarly, it appears Ford planned to construct a dedicated dock in front of the plant for incoming and outgoing ships, but Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate that such a dock was never executed. Most sources indicate that the primary market for the Arabi plant was domestic, specifically Louisiana, Mississippi, and part of Alabama. Ford did utilize the city's port, but Arabi's role in supplying international markets from New Orleans remains uncertain.

The plant officially opened in April 1923. Like Ford's other postwar assembly plants, it was "built to the standard Ford specifications for branch building, of brick and white stone, with special provisions for lighting and ventilation so that cool and comfortable working conditions will be maintained."[35] In its first year of operation, with a capacity of 250 cars daily (60,000 per year), the plant produced 44,679 assembled cars and trucks, which supplied 220 Ford dealers in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.[36] Parts were delivered by ship from Michigan to the Charbonnet Street wharf in the Lower Ninth Ward, offloaded onto freight cars, and delivered by rail to the plant site, while completed automobiles and service parts traveled in freight cars from the plant to various distribution points.[37]

The Arabi plant closed for a year when Ford ceased production of the Model T in 1927 and began production of the new Model A. The facility reopened once it was updated to assemble the new model and, in 1929, it broke production records with an average output of 300 cars per day.[38] In November 1929, at the dawn of the Great Depression, Ford was optimistic that 1930 would be its busiest year ever. Surveys at that time indicated that Fords comprised 48 percent of all automobiles sold in Louisiana, 52 percent in Mississippi, and 58 percent in Alabama.[39] And indeed, 1930 and 1931 were strong years for the Arabi plant, but it was not enough to survive the Depression, and in December 1931 the plant was shuttered. It reopened briefly in 1932, prompting business leaders to celebrate it as a "signal of better times," and in early 1933 Ford sales increased an incredible 386 percent in the New Orleans area, but it was not enough to keep the plant operational.[40] Assembly operations permanently ceased in 1933, and the facility was converted into a Ford parts and distribution center.[41]

Conclusion:

[32] "News and Notes of St. Bernard," *New Orleans States,* March 4, 1923.
[33] "Ford Agents to See Magic of Big Assembling Plant in St. Bernard Parish," *New Orleans States,* April 20, 1923.
[34] "Survey Is Begun for Ford Plant. – Arabi Expects Big Expansion with Establishment of Enterprise," *The Times-Picayune,* June 14, 1922; "Ford's Plant Here to Make 150 Cars Day," *New Orleans Item,* August 9, 1922.
[35] "Ford's Plant Here to Make 150 Cars Day," *New Orleans Item,* August 9, 1922.
[36] "44,679 Ford Cars Assembled Here," *New Orleans States,* March 9, 1924.
[37] "Barges to Bring Automobile Parts. – First Consignment to Start in Steady Traffic Between Ford Plants," *The Times-Picayune,* July 4, 1925.
[38] "Ford Plant Here Reached Record During October. – Orleans Plant Assembled Average of 300 Cars Per Day," *The Times-Picayune,* November 17, 1929.
[39] Ibid.
[40] "Over 1000 Men Go Back to Work at Arabi Plant. – Business Leaders Hail Reopening as Signal of Better Times," *The Times-Picayune,* May 24, 1932; "Ford Sales Increase 165 Percent in State First Quarter, Stolz Says," *The Times-Picayune,* June 18, 1933.
[41] "Closing of Ford Assembly Plant Affects 700 Men," *The Times-Picayune,* January 13, 1933.

The Arabi assembly plant embodies Ford Motor Company's legacy as perhaps the largest and most influential automobile manufacturer in the world in the early 20th century. Like the company's other assembly plants, the Arabi facility was the product of Ford's tireless ingenuity and foresight, which transformed the automotive industry and, with the groundbreaking Model T, forever changed the American landscape by bringing cars to the masses. In addition, the plant is significant for its economic impact on Arabi and the greater New Orleans area. By establishing a plant in this location, Ford drew substantial publicity and attention to both Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes, provided much-needed employment, and reinforced the area's longtime role as a valuable industrial center for the state and Gulf South region.

Criterion C: Architecture

Albert Kahn (1869–1942) is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential industrial architects of all time. His prolific career was defined by numerous "firsts" in the realms of construction technology and architectural design that changed factory building worldwide. On its website for Ford Motor Company's Highland Park Plant, the National Park Service describes Kahn as "the country's foremost industrial architect."[42] Between 1900 and 1940, his firm, Albert Kahn Associates, designed over 2,000 industrial buildings, or one-fifth of all architect-designed industrial buildings in the United States.[43] By the late 1930s, it was the largest architectural firm in the world, with a staff of nearly 600 employees.[44] Although his company designed for numerous clients, Kahn is most closely associated with the rise of Henry Ford and Ford Motor Company, for whom he designed an estimated 1,000+ structures.[45] This nomination is written with the understanding that Kahn is considered a "master architect" in terms of his industrial body of work, and the intention is to demonstrate that the Ford Motor Company branch assembly plant in Arabi, Louisiana, is a "work of a master." To date, at least eight other branch assembly plants are listed in the National Register, most of which are historically significant for their association with Albert Kahn.

Overview of Albert Kahn's Career and Contributions to Industrial Architecture

Albert Kahn was born in 1869 in the industrial town of Rhaunen, Germany, and moved to Detroit, Michigan, with his family in 1880. His father, a rabbi, hoped to find better work in America, but the family continued to struggle financially, and as a young boy Albert began working to provide for his younger siblings. With no formal training and after thwarted efforts in music and art, he began an apprenticeship in 1885 at the architecture firm of Mason and Rice, a position that marked the beginning of his architectural self-education.[46] In 1891, he received a scholarship to travel for a year through Europe, which exposed him to classical precedents and greatly expanded his design vocabulary. His experience abroad significantly contributed to his growth as an architect and influenced his early residential designs. In 1896, Kahn left Mason and Rice to partner with George W. Nettleton and Alexander B. Trowbridge, but the firm was short lived and by 1902 Kahn found himself sole proprietor of Albert Kahn Associates, which soon emerged as its own "well-oiled, high-performing machine."[47] Meanwhile, his brother Julius, an engineer, had recently developed an innovative system of concrete reinforcement, known as the "Kahn System," which provided greater composite strength and was easier to construct than previous versions of the technology. Albert himself stated that his brother's advancements in the use of reinforced concrete at the turn of the 20th century "meant much in the future of my career."[48]

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[42] National Park Service, "Highland Park Ford Plant," https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/detroit/d32.htm.
[43] National Register of Historic Places, Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Seattle, King County, Washington, National Register #00001302, Section 8, pg. 17.
[44] Rubenstein, 63.
[45] National Register of Historic Places, Omaha Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Douglas County, Omaha, Nebraska, National Register #04001412, Section 8, pg. 1.
[46] Detroit Institute of the Arts, 8.
[47] National Register of Historic Places, Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Seattle, King County, Washington, National Register #00001302, Section 8, pg. 18.
[48] Federico Bucci, *Albert Kahn: Architect of Ford* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 31.

Kahn's first major industrial commission was a new plant in 1903 for Detroit's Packard Motor Company (founded 1899). The plant's first nine buildings followed conventional mill construction, but the multi-story Building No. 10 (1905) "introduced a new definition of factory space."[49] To reduce the restrictive and inefficient spacing of structural columns typical of earlier plants, Kahn applied his brother's new concrete reinforcement system to significantly open up the factory floor. Concrete replaced all traditional wood framing and flooring, thus rendering the plant fire-resistive, and also allowed for the reconfiguration of steel wall bracing, which made it possible to install large expanses of fenestration on all exterior walls.[50] In addition, concrete permitted greater floor loads and reduced the effects of vibration caused by machinery.[51] It was the first reinforced concrete factory in the United States.[52] Furthermore, Building No. 10 was notable because it was not perfectly symmetrical or regular, deferring instead to structural and functional needs, with the efficient flow of work being of paramount importance. Packard's new building caught the attention of Henry Ford, who had founded Ford Motor Company two years prior, and it positioned Kahn as an important figure in Detroit's rapidly growing automotive industry.

At his plant for George N. Pierce Company in Buffalo, NY (1906), Kahn developed other characteristics that would become trademarks, namely a 1-story facility with varying heights and glazed sawtooth roofs, which provided day lighting across the factory floor and thus allowed detail work to occur anywhere in the plant rather than near exterior walls only.[53]

By 1909, business at Ford Motor Company was booming, and Henry Ford was planning his new headquarters at Highland Park, which, when it opened in January 1910, was the largest manufacturing plant in the world. He hired Kahn to design the facility, marking the start of a decades-long collaboration with the architect. It soon became apparent that Ford and Kahn shared similar business and work philosophies. Both were of similar age, self taught in their fields, and suspicious of academia and formally trained experts. Both men were prolific within their professions and shared a "can-do" attitude. They valued efficiency, functionality, and creative problem solving, and they considered the health and comfort of the worker to be vital to a company's success. Kahn showed Ford how innovative and adaptable industrial architecture could be, and his own tireless work ethic made him well suited to keep pace with Ford's relentless pursuit of progress and expansion.

Highland Park's 4-story main building (1910) is reinforced-concrete construction with industrial steel sashes imported from England, the first known use of this combination.[54] There is vestigial ornamentation on its exterior, which was all but eliminated in Kahn's later buildings.[55] Other notable buildings on the site, constructed between 1909 and 1913, included a 1-story machine shop with a sawtooth roof, a steel-frame storage building with full-length skylights, and a steel-frame building with continuous roof monitors.[56] In 1918, Kahn designed a 6-story building for the plant that included his hallmark "mushroom" or "bell capital" concrete columns. The buildings had spacious open floor areas, ample windows and roof fenestration to create a "pleasant and productive working environment," and the flexibility for future expansion or connection among structures.[57] These characteristics came to define Ford's Kahn-designed plants, including the first and second generations of branch assembly plants. When Ford instituted his moving assembly line at Highland Park in 1913-14, he worked with Kahn to harness the "free labor" of gravity within the multi-story buildings. Parts were hoisted to the top floor and, from there, the assembly process filtered down via gravity chutes and harnesses

[49] Bucci, *Albert Kahn,* 33.
[50] National Register of Historic Places, Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Seattle, King County, Washington, National Register #00001302, Section 8, pg. 18.
[51] Rubenstein, 63.
[52] Detroit Institute of the Arts, 11.
[53] National Register of Historic Places, Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Seattle, King County, Washington, National Register #00001302, Section 8, pg. 18.
[54] Detroit Institute of the Arts, 12.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] National Park Service, "Highland Park Ford Plant," https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/detroit/d32.htm.

until it reached the 1st floor, where the heaviest parts were worked on the product was finished.[58] This meant that a careful consideration of not just the function of a particular floor but also the relationships between floors was critically important.

The early branch plants, constructed between 1911 and 1916, combined all phases of assembly under one roof rather than spreading them over several buildings, which represented an important step in streamlining the assembly process.[59] Like Highland Park's main building, the plants were usually 4 to 6 stories in height and functions were separated by floor, requiring floor-to-floor connections to accommodate the moving assembly line process. Other typical characteristics include brick, concrete and/or steel construction; large expanses of operable steel windows to provide light and ventilation; widely spaced concrete and/or steel columns to create open floor areas; an honest expression of structure; convenient employee amenities; siting near a major railroad line; and limited exterior ornamentation.

Kahn and Ford made another important leap with the design of Ford's new River Rouge plant (1917-28). Recognizing the inefficiencies of his multi-story plants shortly after they were constructed, Ford envisioned the time and labor savings he could make by setting up his moving assembly line on one continuous level. According to one monograph, Kahn responded to Ford's vision "with a half-mile long building with a steel frame and walls that were an unbroken expanse of glass," known as Building B.[60] This solution became the model for all of Ford's future branch plants. Several of the pre-war plants were rebuilt, and additional plants were constructed in new cities, including the Arabi plant. These second-generation plants, constructed between 1920 and 1932, were typically about 200,000+-SF and produced 25,000-50,000 vehicles per year. Characteristics include: a 1- or 2-story height and expansive floor area to accommodate the moving assembly line on one level; the use of reinforced concrete and/or structural steel framing to create wide, uninterrupted floor spans; a high ratio of fenestration to wall surface and the use of roof monitors or skylights to maximize interior light and ventilation for the health and productivity of the workers; simple form and massing that follow the building's function; easy-to-clean fire-resistive interior finishes; convenient employee amenities; and very limited to no stylistic ornamentation in favor of honest structural expression and an economical use of materials. The Arabi plant possesses all of these character-defining features.

In addition to Ford Motor Company, Albert Kahn Associates' other clients included Packard Motor Company, with whom Kahn worked for 35 years, Chrysler, Republic Steel, and Higgins Aircraft Inc. of New Orleans, among others. In 1928, the firm was awarded a $40 million contract in Soviet Russia, which led to the construction of over 500 Kahn-designed plants throughout the country in just two years.

Shortly before his death in 1942, Kahn gave a talk in Detroit in which he marveled at the progress in factory design over the course of his career, a story in which he played a central role:

> Industrial architecture is continuing its forward march, contributing not only its share to the general welfare but winning recognition even in the field of art, which I dare say was perhaps the last it hoped for. But who would deny that large expanses of glass, for instance, essential in modern industrial building, have not exerted their influence on every day building—even in residential work? Or who would question that the entire field of architecture has been influenced by today's common sense solution of the factory building?[61]

Conclusion:

[58] National Register of Historic Places, Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Seattle, King County, Washington, National Register #00001302,Section 8, pg. 19.
[59] National Register of Historic Places, Omaha Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Douglas County, Omaha, Nebraska, National Register #04001412, Section 8, pg. 1.
[60] Detroit Institute of the Arts, 23.
[61] Ibid, 27.

The Ford Motor Company branch assembly plant in Arabi, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, embodies the key characteristics of Albert Kahn's mature industrial design work and is a distinctive product of his longtime collaboration with Henry Ford. More broadly, Kahn's architectural career reflects the birth and development of the automotive industry in the United States, which significantly altered the country's landscape, and exemplifies the period of intense innovation that shaped the industry during the first half of the 20th century. In response to the unique needs and challenges of automobile manufacturing and assembly, Kahn transformed factory design both physically and functionally through his creative structural systems, such as his use of the "Kahn system" of reinforced concrete, his emphasis on efficiency over artfulness, and his focus on the productive value of worker health and comfort. The Arabi plant is an excellent example of Kahn's contributions to architectural and automotive history and is thus eligible for individual listing under Criterion C.

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

See above.

9. Major Bibliographical Resources

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Books and Articles

The Automobile. "New Orleans Now Has an A.A.A. Club." Vol. 19 (no. 19), November 5, 1908: 656.

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Newspapers

The New Orleans Item

The New Orleans States

The Times-Picayune

National Register Nominations

National Register of Historic Places, Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Seattle, King County, Washington, National Register #00001302.

National Register of Historic Places, Ford Motor Company Building, St. Louis (independent city), Missouri, National Register #01000840.

National Register of Historic Places, Ford Motor Company Service Building, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah, National Register #00001302.

National Register of Historic Places, Omaha Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, Douglas County, Omaha, Nebraska, National Register #04001412.

Other

Albert Kahn Associates. "Ford Motor Co., New Orleans, LA, Job No. 1073." Architectural drawings, 1922.

Construction photographs, Ford Motor Company, New Orleans, LA, 1922-23, thehenryford.org.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1929-40, 1937-51 series.

Soards' city directories, New Orleans, LA, 1900, 1905.

Conveyance records, St. Bernard Parish Clerk of Court.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__x__ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
_____ previously listed in the National Register
_____previously determined eligible by the National Register
_____designated a National Historic Landmark
_____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
_____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
_____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_____ State Historic Preservation Office
_____ Other State agency
_____ Federal agency
_____ Local government
_____ University
__X__ Other
Name of repository: _____thehenryford.org_____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): ___N/A_____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 16 acres (historic); 27.8 acres (current)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 29.946381° Longitude: -90.005489°
2. Latitude: 29.949486° Longitude: -90.003683°
3. Latitude: 29.949400° Longitude: -90.003306°
4. Latitude: 29.949442° Longitude: -90.002006°
5. Latitude: 29.945547° Longitude: -90.004072°

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic boundaries begin 383.5 feet east of the corner of Friscoville Avenue and North Peters Street, on the batture side of the levee, and run easterly along the Mississippi River for 500 feet; the eastern boundary runs 1546 feet north from the Mississippi River to Bienvenue Street; the north boundary follows the bend in Bienvenue Street west approximately 500 feet; the western boundary runs south 1124.8 feet to the Mississippi River. See submitted boundary map for further information.

The property was gradually expanded to include a small parcel to the west and a larger parcel to the east. This land was acquired after the period of significance, which ends in 1933, and therefore is not included within the historic boundaries.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries are based on conveyance records and a property survey dated November 1, 1977 (see enclosed boundary map). These boundaries reflect the historic boundaries of the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Gabrielle Begue, Principal
organization: Clio Associates LLC
street & number: 1139 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd.
city or town: New Orleans state: LA zip code: 70113
e-mail: gabrielle@clioassociates.com
telephone: (504) 858-4426
date: 2/26/2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant
City or Vicinity: Arabi, Louisiana
County: St. Bernard Parish
State: Louisiana
Name of Photographer: Rick Fifield
Date of Photographs: January 2018

1 of 18: Exterior view of 2-story front façade/south elevation; camera facing east

2 of 18: Exterior view of east elevation showing 1- and 2-story sections; camera facing northwest

3 of 18: Exterior view of east elevation of 2-story section; camera facing northwest

4 of 18: Original wood doors and steel windows, east elevation; camera facing northwest

5 of 18: Exterior view of east elevation looking toward Mississippi River; camera facing southwest

6 of 18: Exterior view of northwest corner of the assembly plant looking at west elevation; camera facing south

7 of 18: Exterior view of southwest corner of the assembly plant looking at front entrance; camera facing northeast

8 of 18: Exterior view of front entrance to assembly plant showing replacement door and windows; camera facing northeast

9 of 18: Modified entry to assembly plant with original terrazzo floors; camera facing north

10 of 18: 1st-floor interior view of front 2-story section showing Kahn's "bell capital" or "mushroom" concrete columns; camera facing southeast

11 of 18: 1st-floor interior view of assembly area showing structural steel framing; camera facing northwest

12 of 18: Original elevated men's restroom; camera facing east

13 of 18: Freight elevator and stairwell, 1st floor; camera facing southeast

14 of 18: 2nd-floor interior view showing Kahn's "bell capital" or "mushroom" concrete columns; camera facing southeast

15 of 18: 2nd-floor interior view showing later partitions; camera facing southeast

16 of 18: Exterior view of oil pump house and view of site to the rear of the assembly plant; camera facing west

17 of 18: Exterior view of oil pump house; camera facing south

18 of 18: Interior view of 1st floor of oil pump house; camera facing northeast

Figure 1. Local newspaper advertisement for the Ford Model T, *New Orleans Item,* September 9, 1909.

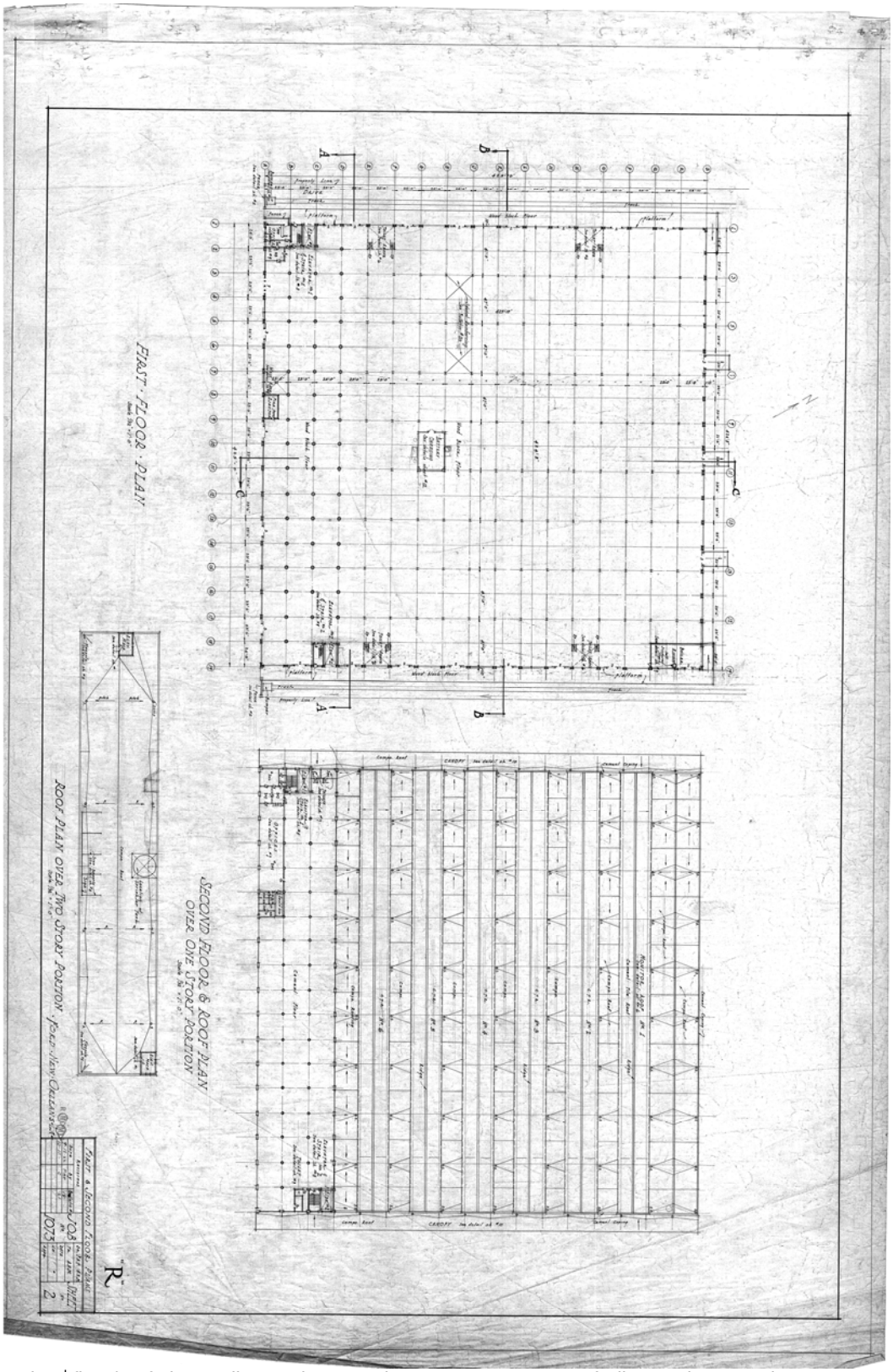


Figure 2. 1st floor and 2nd floor/roof plans, Albert Kahn Associates, 1922. Courtesy of Albert Kahn Associates, 7430 Second Avenue, Detroit, MI, 48202-2798, albertkahn.com.

Figure 3. The Arabi assembly plant under construction in November 1922. The Domino Sugar Refinery is visible in the distance. From the Collections of The Henry Ford. Gift of Ford Motor Company.

Figure 4. 2nd-floor interior of the Arabi assembly plant nearing completion, 1923. From the Collections of The Henry Ford. Gift of Ford Motor Company.

Figure 5. Exterior view of the near-completed Arabi assembly plant from North Peters Street, 1923. From the Collections of The Henry Ford. Gift of Ford Motor Company.

Figure 6. View of completed 1st-floor interior of the Arabi assembly plant, 1923. From the Collections of The Henry Ford. Gift of Ford Motor Company.

FORD MOTOR CAR SECTION

NEW ORLEANS STATES

THE PAPER THAT GOES HOME

FORD MOTOR CAR SECTION

FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 20, 1923.

Ford Agents To See Magic Of Big Assembling Plant In St. Bernard Parish

A Car Every Three Minutes Shoots Out of St. Bernard Plant Under Own Power ---Orleans Buys 10 Fords a Day.

When any city gets linked up with the fortune and business acumen of Henry Ford, it is meete for its Chamber of Commerce to toot long and loud on its trombone.

It has something to blow about.

Views of the Great Ford Assembling Plant in Orleans

ANNOUNCING

The Formal Opening of the New

Ford

Assembly Plant in New Orleans

Commencing Monday, April 23rd, the Plant will be open to Visitors daily, and we will be glad to show you through. Guides provided.

HOURS—8:30 A. M. to 4:30 P. M.

Come and See How FORDS Are Made

Ford Motor Company

End of Dauphine Street Car Line

St. Bernard Parish

Figure 7. Full-page opening announcement of the new Ford Motor Company assembly plant in Arabi. *New Orleans States,* April 20, 1923.

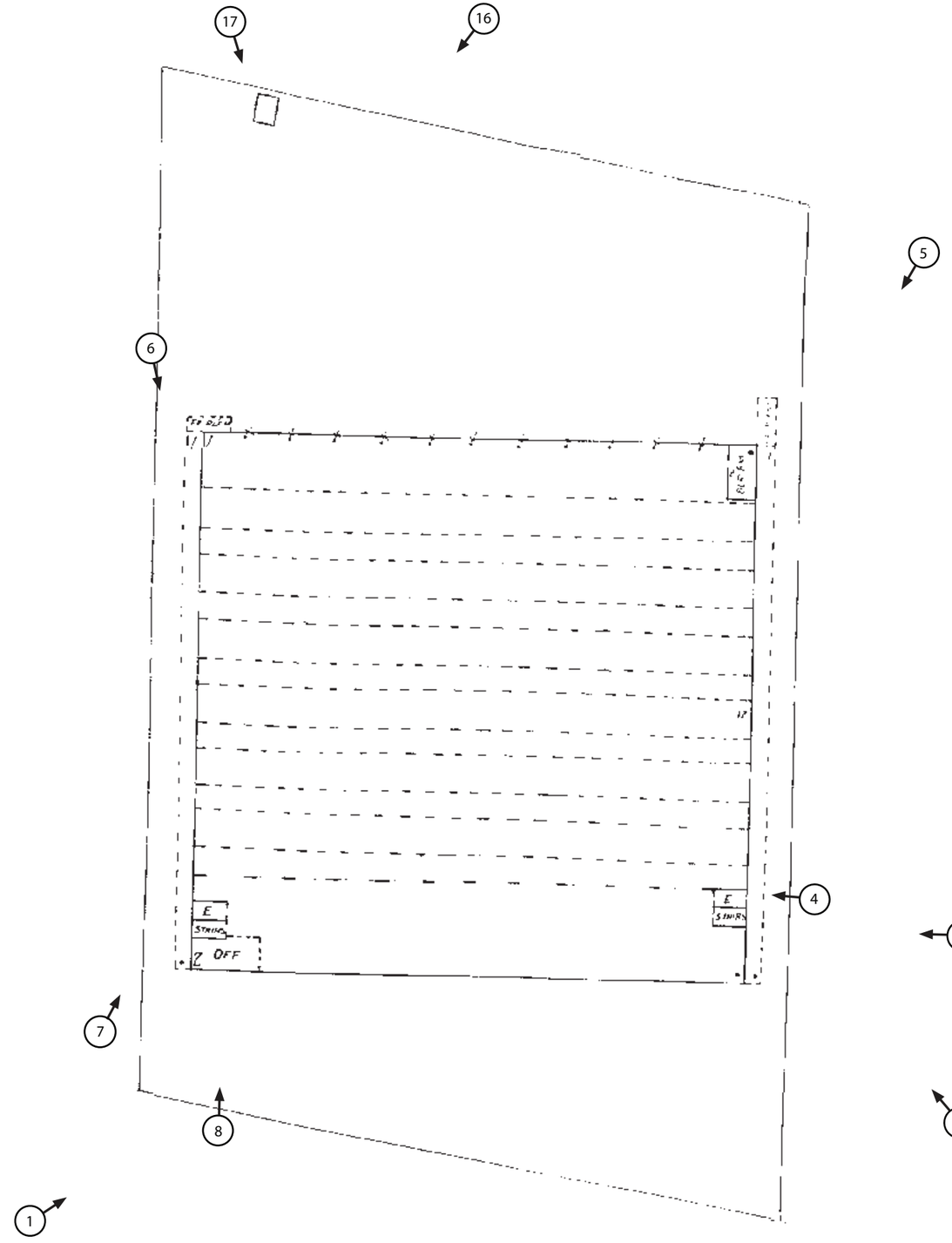
Figure 8. Panoramic photograph of the façade of the new Arabi assembly plant and its workforce, 1924. (The Charles L. Franck Studio Collection at The Historic New Orleans Collection, Acc. No. 1979.325.7035. Courtesy of The Historic New Orleans Collection)

Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, St. Bernard Parish, LA

Latitude: 29.947068 Longitude: -90.003948


Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant
St. Bernard Parish, LA
Boundary Map (with scale)
Latitude/longitude coordinates:
1: 29.946381°, -90.005489°
2: 29.949486°, -90.003683°
3: 29.949400°, -90.003306°
4: 29.949442°, -90.002006°
5: 29.945547°, -90.004072°
Bienvenue St
Community St
Center St
Talba St
Hernandez St
Frisco ville Ave
Pump House
These non-historic sheds are no longer extant.
Assembly Plant
N Peters St
1
2
3
4
5
Google Earth
© 2018 Google
800 ft
N

BIENVENUE STREET (SIDE)



FRISCOVILLE AVENUE (SIDE)

REFINERY SIDE

N

N. PETERS STREET

Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant
St. Bernard Parish, LA

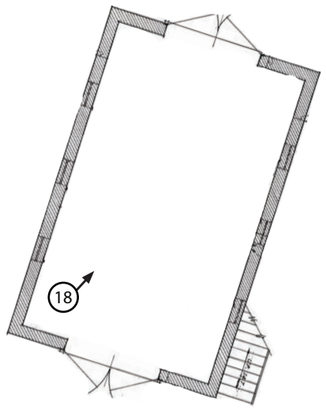
7200 N. PETERS STREET

SITE PLAN

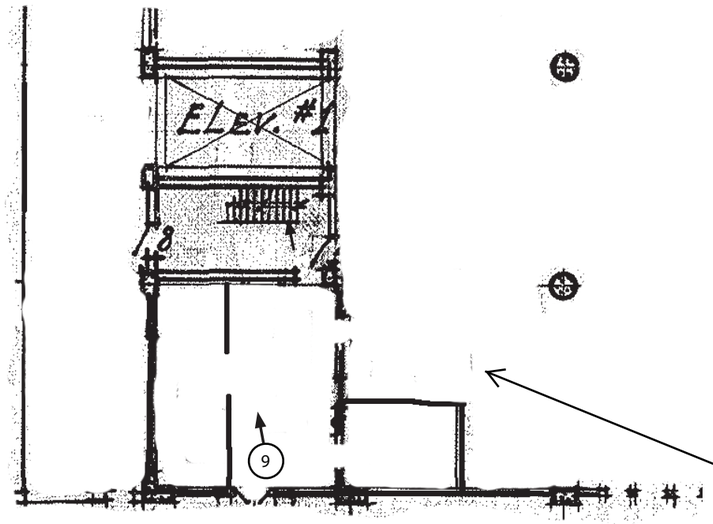
NOT TO SCALE

PHOTO KEY

ARABI, LA



OIL PUMP HOUSE - FIRST FLOOR PLAN

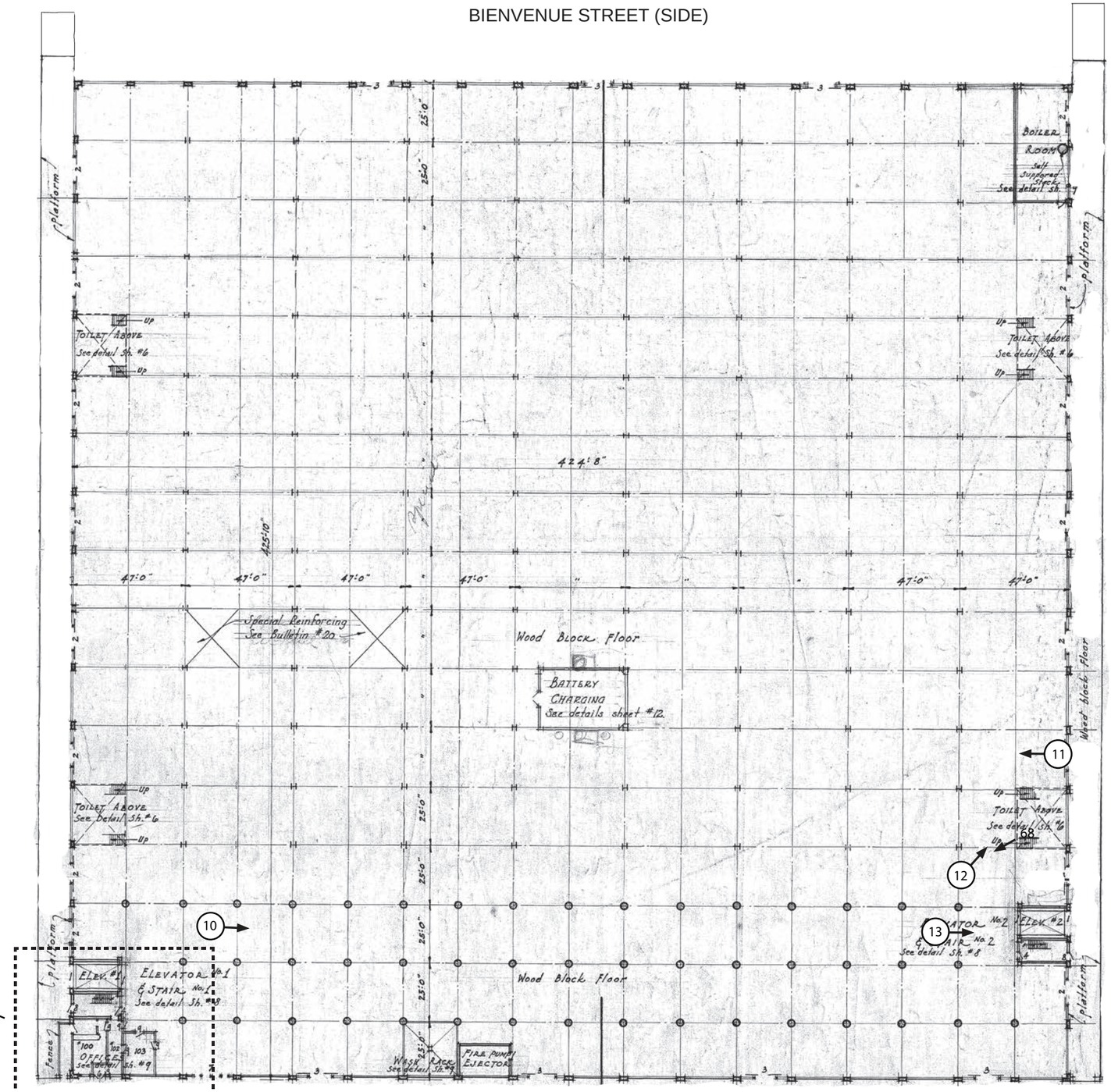


OFFICE PLAN

BIENVENUE STREET (SIDE)

FRISCOVILLE AVENUE (SIDE)

REFINERY SIDE



N

N. PETERS STREET

Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant
St. Bernard Parish, LA

7200 N. PETERS STREET

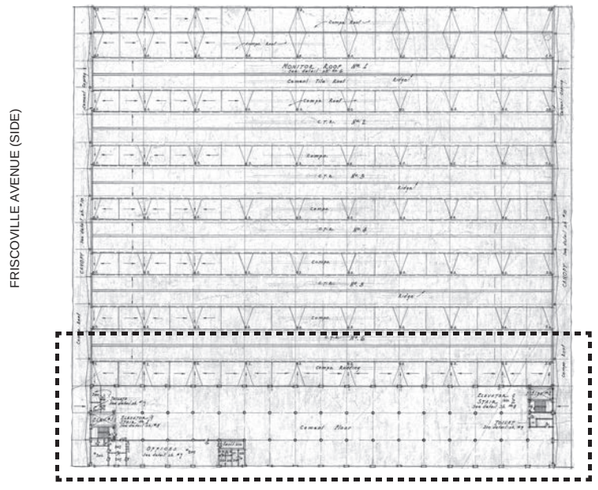
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PHOTO KEY

NOT TO SCALE

ARABI, LA

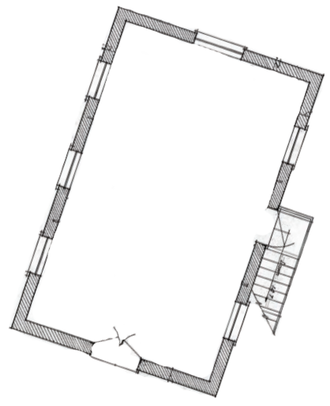
BIENVENUE STREET (SIDE)



FRISCOVILLE AVENUE (SIDE)

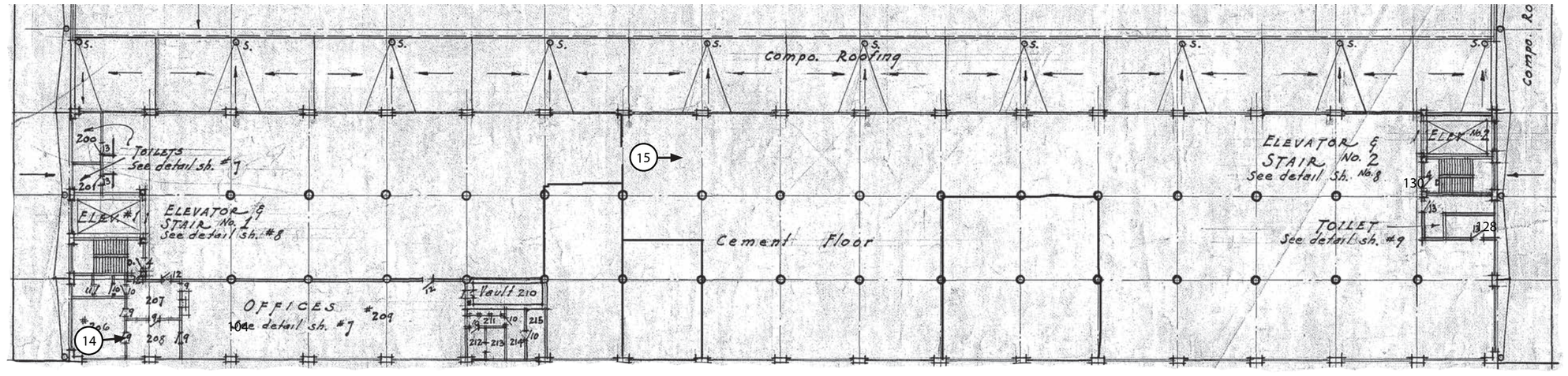
REFINERY SIDE

N. PETERS STREET



OIL PUMP HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR PLAN

BIENVENUE STREET (SIDE)



FRISCOVILLE AVWNUE (SIDE)

REFINERY SIDE

N. PETERS STREET

N

Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant
St. Bernard Parish, LA

7200 N. PETERS STREET

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

NOT TO SCALE

PHOTO KEY

ARABI, LA


MEN


P36

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	LOUISIANA, St. Bernard

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
5/10/2018	5/30/2018	6/14/2018	6/25/2018	

Reference number:	SG100002589
Nominator:	State

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	X PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	__ CLG	

__X__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject __6/22/2018__ Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	Designed by Albert Kahn Associates, Ford's "go-to" architect, the assembly plant is another example of the Ford company's extensive, vertically integrated business model. An important industrial component of Arabi, the assembly plant's location also allowed for it to serve places upriver.
Recommendation/ Criteria	Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

BILLY NUNGESSER
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

RICHARD H. HARTLEY
DEPUTY SECRETARY
KRISTIN P. SANDERS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

DATE: May 9, 2018

TO: Mr. James Gabbert
National Park Service Mail Stop 7228
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

FROM: Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator
Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation

RE: Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, St. Bernard Parish, LA

Jim,

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the National Register Documentation for the Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant to be placed in the National Register of Historic Places. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 225-219-4595, or jrichardson@crt.la.gov.

Thanks,

Jessica

Enclosures:
X CD with PDF of the National Register of Historic Places nomination form
X CD with electronic images (tiff format)
X Physical Transmission Letter
X Physical Signature Page, with original signature
_____ Other:

Comments:
_____ Please ensure that this nomination receives substantive review
X This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
_____ The enclosed owner(s) objection(s) do_____ do not_____ constitute a majority of property owners. (Publicly owned property)
_____ Other: